



GAIL FARBER, Director

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

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IN REPLY PLEASE

REFER TO FILE: **PR-0**

September 3, 2009

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Bob Spencer
Chief, Public Affairs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Bob Spencer", is written over the "FROM:" line.

AUGUST 2009 WILDFIRES – DIRECTOR'S REPORT NO. 4 SEPTEMBER 3, 2009 – 4 PM

On behalf of Gail Farber, Director of Public Works, I am pleased to provide you with the following update of our continuing activities related to the August wildfires.

While we continue providing as-needed firefighting assistance to various agencies and as containment of the situation continues to improve, our major focus is now shifting to damage assessment, repair, and recovery. Public Works' strike teams are being assembled for deployment into the burn areas. Some teams have already visited affected areas. Other teams will be assigned to the effort once additional burn areas have been declared safe.

ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Our top priority is the repair and reopening of all roads throughout the burn areas. Public Works' engineers are meeting with Caltrans and the United States Forest Service (USFS) to expedite road repairs and ensure all roads and highways are reopened as soon as possible. Some damage assessment of guardrails, signs, and roadway striping has already commenced. So far, about 95 damaged guardrail locations have been identified and more are expected. Crews have also begun drainage inspections and debris removal and continue to clear roadways of fallen rocks when needed.

The issue of burned trees along roadways is also being assessed and evaluated. So far, approximately 760 burned trees have been identified, 260 of these trees are along Angeles Forest Highway alone. Public Works is meeting with USFS officials to discuss and resolve the removal and hauling of affected trees.

FLOOD CONTROL SYSTEM

All dams are fully operational. Big Tujunga, San Gabriel, Santa Anita, Cogswell, and Morris Dams remain on automatic mode. The Dam Operator and the JOC contractor have been allowed to return to work at Big Dalton Dam. A damage assessment of the Big Dalton operator's residence has been completed, and his family has returned.

The \$88 million Big Tujunga Dam Seismic Rehabilitation and Spillway Modification project sustained minor damage. Construction work has stopped until our supply issues are resolved.

Twenty-four debris basins will be scheduled for cleanout due to the burned watershed condition. Public Works' staff have identified eight debris basins adjacent to the burn areas that will be evaluated for storage capacity. Public Works' experts will develop recommendations to increase capacity if appropriate.

With control of the fires now in sight, attention is rapidly shifting to the disaster's aftermath and the risk of potential mudflow impacts to residences and structures during the next winter season. Letters have now been sent to the Public Works Directors of affected cities offering advice on temporary mudflow protection measures. In addition, engineering advice teams are being assembled and are expected to be deployed over the upcoming holiday weekend to assist residents in assessing potential risks.

AVIATION

Aerial firefighting operations continue to be supported at Brackett Field, La Verne (SD5); General Wm. J. Fox Airfield, Lancaster (SD5); and Whiteman Airport, Pacoima (SD3).

In addition, the Dunsmuir Sediment Placement Site helipad is being used for helicopter water reloading. The helipad was constructed by Public Works and the Fire Department 3 years ago for use during fires. The Fire Department is also using Public Works' Sawpit Sediment Placement Site in the City of Sierra Madre as a staging area and heliport for firefighting.

MEDIA

We are now beginning to field media calls concerning the potential flood and mudslide risk in the aftermath of the fire and the coming winter season. Today, September 3, Deputy Director, Mark Pestrella, conducted live and taped interviews on

Each Supervisor
September 3, 2009
Page 3

KTLA Channel 5. Inquiries about the mudslide potential have also been received from the *Pasadena Star News* and *Associated Press*. The inquiries have provided Public Works with the opportunity to promote our city and residential no-cost mudflow potential service and the free sandbag program we conduct in conjunction with the Fire Department.

Media contacts should be directed to Bob Spencer, Chief, Public Affairs, at (626) 458-4070 (office) or (626) 703-7400 (cell); or to Gary Boze, Public Information Officer, at (626) 458-4094 (office) or (213) 703-6483 (cell).

Public Works remains on standby in the event of further requests for assistance. Additional Director's Reports will be provided in the future as new or additional information becomes available.

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cc: Chief Executive Office (Sheehan)
Executive Office